



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/904,471	07/13/2001	Robert R. DeWitt	0412-P02404USO	8106

110 7590 11/16/2006

DANN, DORFMAN, HERRELL & SKILLMAN
1601 MARKET STREET
SUITE 2400
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-2307

EXAMINER

WU, RUTAO

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3628

DATE MAILED: 11/16/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/904,471

Applicant(s)

DEWITT ET AL.

Examiner

Rob Wu

Art Unit

3628

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-5,8-13,17,18,29 and 31-69 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-5,8-13,17,18,29 and 31-69 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 50 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on May 30, 2006 has been entered.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 50 is objected to because of the following informalities: 'or' should be 'of'. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claim 68 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5. Regarding claim 68, the phrase "and/or" renders the claim(s) indefinite because it is unclear whether the two limitations both have to be present or only one limitation has to be present.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1, 3-5, 8-13, 17-18, 29, 31-69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat No. 5,308,932 to Manduley et al in view of U.S. Pat No. 7,060,926 to Edmonds in further view of U.S. Pat No. 4,024,380 to Gunn.

Referring to claim 1:

An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:

Manduley et al disclose

A transport for conveying mail along a transport path; (col 3: lines 72-32)

A scale positioned along the transport path for weighing the pieces of mail; (col 4: lines 20-24)

An imaging station positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to obtain image data for the mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces; (col 4: lines 40-45)

A processor operable to determine postal information for a piece of mail in response to the determined address information and weight of the piece of mail; (col 4: lines 23-25)

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label and applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels and apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Manduley et al disclose a sorter that mail pieces can be send to for further processing.(col 5: lines 10-11) Manduley et al however does not expressly disclose that the sorter is sorting mailpieces in response to the determined address information and weight.

Edmonds discloses a mail processing system where the OCR system scans the address present on the mailpiece and sort them based on zip code. (col 2: lines 64-66) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time

the invention was made for Manduley et al's mail system to sort by address information. One would be motivated to perform such step because sorting by address is well known in the arts and facilitate mail delivering.

Referring to claim 3:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging station comprises a line scan camera for scanning the piece of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create a set of image data representative of at least a portion of the piece of mail. (col 4: lines 42-44)

Referring to claim 4:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 3 wherein the imaging station comprises an imaging computer for processing the image data to determine the address information. (col 4: lines 45-47)

Referring to claim 5:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of the claim 4 wherein the imaging computer analyzes the image data utilizing OCR to determine the address and the zipcode of the recipient of the piece, (col 4: lines 45-47)

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose that the piece is rejected if the determined address and zipcode do not properly correlate. Edmonds discloses that if the OCR reads an incorrect barcode, the letter is then rejected by the OCR. (col 2: lines 3-4) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al to reject a mailpiece if incorrect information is shown on the mailpiece. Manduley et al would be motivated to perform

Art Unit: 3628

this step because Manduley et al's system is designed to verify the postage amount, so any misinformation present in the address field should be rejected to deter fraud.

Referring to claim 8:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose a reject bin for receiving pieces for which the recipient's address is not determined. Edmonds discloses that if the OCR reads an incorrect barcode, the letter is then rejected by the OCR. (col 2: lines 3-4) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al to reject a mailpiece if incorrect information is shown on the mailpiece. Manduley et al would be motivated to perform this step because Manduley et al's system is designed to verify the postage amount, so any misinformation present in the address field should be rejected to deter fraud.

Referring to claim 9:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 1 comprising a re-orientor operable to re-orient the mail as the feeder feeds the mail into the transport. (col 3: lines 16-20)

Referring to claim 10:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transport comprises a roller bed for conveying the pieces of mail in a generally horizontal orientation (Fig 1)

Referring to claims 11 and 12:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose a verifier operable to scan the pieces and determine whether the postal information was properly printed wherein the verifier

comprises a line scan camera for scanning the pieces of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create image data representative of at least a portion of the pieces of mail.

Manduley et al does disclose that the OCR is operable to read address as well as other determined information and the value of the postage affixed to the mailpiece as well as any presort and barcode information if desired, in order to capture additional information such as the address and the affixed postal amount. (col 4: lines 41-47)

Manduley et al also disclose that the indicia printed has to allow a easy comparisons by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official (col 4: lines 28-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Manduley et al's mail system to use the OCR to read and verify the postal indicial printed is readable by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official.

Referring to claim 13:

Manduley et al disclose a method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:

Scanning a piece of mail to determine address information for the recipient; (col 4: lines 40-45)

Conveying the piece of mail to a scale; (col 3: lines 72-32)

Weighing the piece; (col 4: lines 20-24)

Determining the appropriate postal information based on the determined address information and the determine weight of the piece; (col 4: lines 23-25)

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label and applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels and apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Manduley et al disclose a sorter that mail pieces can be send to for further processing.(col 5: lines 10-11) Manduley et al however does not expressly disclose that the sorter is sorting mailpieces in response to the determined address information and weight.

Edmonds discloses a mail processing system where the OCR system scans the address present on the mailpiece and sort them based on zip code. (col 2: lines 64-66) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's mail system to sort by address information. One would be motivated to perform such step because sorting by address is well known in the arts and facilitate mail delivering.

Referring to claim 17:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose a step of scanning the printed postal information to verify that the postal information was properly printed.

Manduley et al does disclose that the OCR is operable to read address as well as other determined information and the value of the postage affixed to the mailpiece as well as any presort and barcode information if desired, in order to capture additional information such as the address and the affixed postal amount. (col 4: lines 41-47)

Manduley et al also disclose that the indicia printed has to allow a easy comparisons by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official (col 4: lines 28-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Manduley et al's mail system to use the OCR to read and verify the postal indicial printed is readable by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official.

Referring to claim 18:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 13 comprising the step of serially feeding the piece from a stack of mail in an input bin. (col 4: lines 16-18)

Referring to claim 29:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose the apparatus of claim 1 comprising a sorter for sorting a piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins in response to the determined weight for the piece.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing, including sorting the mailpieces by weight, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 31:

Manduley et al disclose an apparatus for processing mail, comprising:

A transport for conveying mail along a path; (col 3: lines 72-32)

A scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail; (col 4: lines 20-24)

A scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to obtain image data for the mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces; (col 4: lines 40-45)

A processor operable to determine postage information for a piece of mail in response to the weight of the piece of mail; (col 4: lines 23-25)

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label and applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels and apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Manduley et al does not expressly a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece of mail.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing, including sorting the mailpieces by weight, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 32:

The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the processor determines the postage information in response to the determined recipient's address information and the weight of the piece. (col 3: lines 39-43)

Referring to claim 33:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose the apparatus of claim 31 wherein the sorter is operable to sort the piece of mail based on the weight of the piece of mail and the address information for the recipient of the piece of mail.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing, including sorting the mailpieces by weight and by address of the recipient of the piece of mail, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 34:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 31 wherein the scanner comprises a line scan camera for scanning the piece of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create a set of image data representative of at least a portion of the piece of mail. (col 4: lines 41-46)

Referring to claim 35:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 34 wherein the scanner comprises an imaging computer for processing the image data to determine the recipient of the piece. (col 4: lines 41-46)

Referring to claim 36:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of the claim 35 wherein the imaging computer analyzes the image data utilizing OCR to determine the address and the Zipcode of the recipient of the piece, (col 4: lines 41-46)

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose that the piece is rejected if the determined address and zipcode do not properly correlate. Edmonds discloses that if the OCR reads an incorrect barcode, the letter is then rejected by the OCR. (col 2: lines 3-4) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al to reject a mailpiece if incorrect information is shown on the mailpiece. Manduley et al would be motivated to perform this step because Manduley et al's system is designed to verify the postage amount, so any misinformation present in the address field should be rejected to deter fraud.

Referring to claim 37:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose a reject bin for receiving pieces for which the recipient's address is not determined. Edmonds discloses that if the OCR reads an incorrect barcode, the letter is then rejected by the OCR. (col 2: lines 3-4) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al to reject a mailpiece if incorrect information is shown on the mailpiece. Manduley et al would be motivated to perform this step because Manduley et al's system is designed to verify the postage amount, so any misinformation present in the address field should be rejected to deter fraud.

Referring to claim 38:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 31 comprising a re-orientor operable to re-orient the mail as the feeder feeds the mail into the transport. (col 3: lines 16-20)

Referring to claim 39:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 31 wherein the transport is configured to transport the pieces of mail in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claims 40 and 41:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose a verifier operable to scan the pieces and determine whether the postal information was properly printed wherein the verifier comprises a line scan camera for scanning the pieces of mail at a plurality of discrete points to create image data representative of at least a portion of the pieces of mail.

Manduley et al does disclose that the OCR is operable to read address as well as other determined information and the value of the postage affixed to the mailpiece as

well as any presort and barcode information if desired, in order to capture additional information such as the address and the affixed postal amount. (col 4: lines 41-47)

Manduley et al also disclose that the indicia printed has to allow a easy comparisons by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official (col 4: lines 28-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Manduley et al's mail system to use the OCR to read and verify the postal indicial printed is readable by a postal route carrier or other Post Office official.

Referring to claim 42:

Manduley et al disclose an apparatus for processing mail, comprising:

A transport for conveying mail along a path; (col 3: lines 72-32)

A scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail; (col 4: lines 20-24)

A scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to obtain image data for the mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces; (col 4: lines 40-45)

A processor operable to determine postage information for a piece of mail in response to the weight of the piece of mail; (col 4: lines 23-25)

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label and applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18).

Art Unit: 3628

Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels and apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 43:

Manduley et al does not expressly disclose the apparatus of claim 42 comprising a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail based on the weight of the piece of mail and the address information for the recipient of the piece of mail.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing, including sorting the mailpieces by weight and by address of the recipient of the piece of mail, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 44:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 42 wherein the processor is operable to selectively determine the postage information for the piece of mail in response to the recipient of the piece of mail. (col 3: lines 40-42)

Referring to claim 45:

Manduley et al disclose a method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:

Scanning a piece of mail to determine the recipient; (col 4: lines 40-45)

Conveying the piece of mail along a transport path to a scale; (col 3: lines 72-32)

Weighing the piece; (col 4: lines 20-24)

Determining the postal information based on the determined weight of the piece;
(col 4: lines 23-25)

Conveying the piece along the transport path to a labeler. (Fig 1)

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label and applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels and apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Manduley et al does not expressly a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece of mail.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing, including sorting the mailpieces by weight, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 46:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 45 wherein the step of determining the appropriate postage comprises determining the appropriate postage based on the determined address and the determined weight of the piece. (col 4: lines 20-23, 42-44)

Referring to claim 47:

Manduley et al disclose a sorter that mail pieces can be send to for further processing.(col 5: lines 10-11) Manduley et al however does not expressly disclose that the sorter is sorting mailpieces in response to the recipient's address.

Edmonds discloses a mail processing system where the OCR system scans the address present on the mailpiece and sort them based on zip code. (col 2: lines 64-66) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's mail system to sort by address information. One would be motivated to perform such step because sorting by address is well known in the arts and facilitate mail delivering.

Referring to claim 48:

Manduley et al disclose a method for processing mail, comprising the steps of:

Art Unit: 3628

Scanning a piece of mail to determine the recipient; (col 4: lines 40-45)

Conveying the piece of mail along a transport path to a scale; (col 3: lines 72-32)

Weighing the piece; (col 4: lines 20-24)

Determining the postal information based on the determined weight of the piece;
(col 4: lines 23-25)

Conveying the piece along the transport path to a labeler. (Fig 1)

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Manduley et al does not expressly a sorter operable to sort the piece of mail into one of a plurality of bins based on the weight of the piece of mail.

However, Manduley et al does disclose that the mailpieces may be sent to an optional sorter for further processing. (col 5: lines 10-11) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to sort mailpieces to according to method of processing,

including sorting the mailpieces by weight, since sorting based on certain variables are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 49:

Manduley et al disclose a printer operable to print the determined postal information, (col 4: lines 20-22) however, Manduley does not expressly disclose that the printer can print the postal information on a label.

However, a postal printer that can print on both mailpiece and labels are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to also print postal information on labels. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 50:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transport is configured to convey a batch of mixed mail of various heights and thickness. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 51:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 50 wherein the transport is a substantially horizontal transport configured to convey the mail pieces to the imaging station in a substantially horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 52:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 13 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail of various heights and thickness. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 53:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 13 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 54:

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 55:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 31 wherein the transport comprises a generally horizontal surface configured to receive and convey the mail pieces in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 56:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 31 comprising a feeder configured to accommodate a mixed batch of mail having pieces of various size. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 57:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 42 wherein the transport comprises a generally horizontal surface configured to receive and convey the mail pieces in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 58:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 42 comprising a feeder configured to accommodate a mixed batch of mail having pieces of various size. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 59:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 45 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail having pieces of various size. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 60:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 45 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 61:

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the

mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 62:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 48 comprising the step of providing a batch of mixed mail having pieces of various size. (Fig 1, Fig 4)

Referring to claim 63:

Manduley et al disclose the method of claim 48 wherein the step of conveying comprises conveying the piece of mail in a generally horizontal orientation. (Fig 1)

Referring to claim 64:

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 65:

Manduley et al disclose an apparatus for processing mail, comprising:

A transport for configured for conveying mail in a generally horizontal orientation along a path; (Fig 1; col 3: lines 72-32)

Art Unit: 3628

A scale positioned along the path for weighing the pieces of mail; (col 4: lines 20-24)

A scanner positioned along the transport path for scanning the pieces of mail to determine address information of the recipients of the pieces; (col 4: lines 40-45)

A processor operable to determine postal information for a piece of mail in response to the determined address information and weight of the piece of mail; (col 4: lines 23-25)

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claim 66:

Manduley et al disclose the apparatus of claim 65 wherein the processor is operable to determine the postal information for the piece in response to the weight and the determined address information. (col 4: lines 20-23, 42-44)

Referring to claim 67:

Manduley does not expressly disclose applying the label to the mailpiece.

However, placing labels on mailpieces are well known in the art as evident by the disclosure provided by Gunn (col 4: lines 17-18). Gunn discloses a postal service system with a conveyor belt transport system that automatically applies the printed label to the mailpiece. (col 2: lines 15-18; col 5: lines 10-12)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's postal system to apply it on the mailpiece. One would be motivated to perform such step because such capabilities are well known in the arts.

Referring to claims 68 and 69:

Manduley et al disclose a sorter that mail pieces can be send to for further processing.(col 5: lines 10-11) Manduley et al however does not expressly disclose that the sorter is sorting mailpieces in response to the determined address information and weight.

Edmonds discloses a mail processing system where the OCR system scans the address present on the mailpiece and sort them based on zip code. (col 2: lines 64-66) Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Manduley et al's mail system to sort by address information. One would be motivated to perform such step because sorting by address is well known in the arts and facilitate mail delivering.

Conclusion

8. Examiner's Note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant.

Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the applicant, in preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

U.S. Pat No. 4,725,718 to Sansone et al.

U.S. Pat No. 5,680,742 to Hidding.

U.S. Pat No. 6,613,998 to DeWitt et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rob Wu whose telephone number is (571)272-3136.

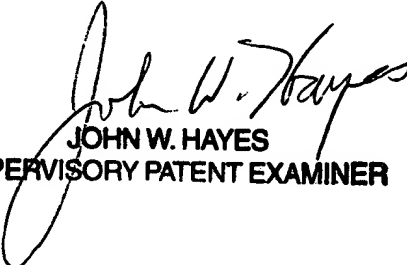
The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571)272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3628

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

rw


JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER